

The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now.

Individuals and Communities Recognized at 2004 Awards Luncheon

By Keith Majors, Davenport City Arborist

April 1 in Des Moines was no April Fools Day for the Iowa Urban and Community Forestry Council. 129 communities received recognition as Tree City USA recipients. The Council also announced the 2004 Iowa Arbor Day Poster Contest Winners, presented seven special Council Awards, and gave out two Tree Line USA Awards.



The Council's Charter Members, from left to right: State Forester Mike Brandrup (presenting awards), Jeff Iles, Shannon Ramsay, Keith Majors, Paul Wray, and John Walkowiak. Not pictured: Lisa Burban, Rick Tagtow.

Several people spoke and their presentations were well received and appreciated, but one speaker seemed to catch the most attention. Iowa's First Lady Christie Vilsack took the stage to a standing ovation, which she humbly mentioned was unnecessary. She proceeded to speak from her heart as she relived her childhood and told of how the planting of trees by her father had such an impact on her life. It was quite apparent that the First Lady connected with the 300 tree advocates in the room. Her story was one that I share, as my father's love of trees guided me to a career as an arborist. And as I looked around, I saw many people whose appreciation of trees had

likely developed as a result of the influence of similar mentors and experiences.

Mrs. Vilsack then read the proclamation, which was signed by Governor Tom Vilsack. As the awards were given out and people lined up for their photos with the First Lady, it was obvious how much the attendees appreciated her presence and sincerity. She joked about how she was going to lose her smile and begin to sulk, but she had a smile throughout the long process.

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President's Message

Several Iowans had the opportunity to attend the Midwestern Chapter International Society of Arboriculture Annual Conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma from February 11-13, 2004. We escaped the frigid snow of Iowa and basked in the above freezing temperatures of Oklahoma, where we witnessed the locals actually planting trees. The conference hotel was relatively new and either the landscaping was not quite finished or some of the new trees were already being replaced. Naturally, these plantings drew our attention and several attendees made their way over to inspect. The discussion that followed dealt with planting depths and the soil condition. It was typical of what we are seeing too much of in Iowa: the holes were too deep and the soils were very poor. The one hole that was still open showed a mucky clay soil with about 4 to 6 inches of water in the bottom. These conditions do not inspire a lot of optimism about the success of the trees.

I have a book titled "The Simple Act of Planting a Tree" (by Andy Lipkis, Katie Lipkis, and TreePeople). It talks about tree planting as a noble act, and how through planting trees we are building communities. It also shows how to properly plant a tree. If this is such a simple process, why are we still seeing so many problems? After all, on the surface it does appear to be a simple process. Basically we just need to remember *green side up*, right? Wrong!! Properly planting a tree is more involved than that, and we are failing to accomplish this vital objective. We need to remember basics like the concept of putting the right tree in the right place. Also, growers need to leave a sufficient root mass on the tree. And the balls and containers should clearly identify the root collar, so that the person planting the tree has at least a fighting chance of getting the right hole depth. It's also essential to remove the plastic, burlap and wire, and to not overdo with the mulch and stakes. Additionally, if developers leave good topsoil on the site, the survival rate of new plantings dramatically improves. Tree planting shouldn't be as difficult as balancing the Federal budget, but better attention to what's best for the health of the tree would go a long way towards improving the quality and increasing the longevity of our urban forest.

Keith Majors

Communities Awarded Grants for Spring Projects

Forty community organizations across the state were selected to receive funds for tree-planting projects this spring through grants from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Keepers of the Land program and the US Forest Service. The \$36,000 from the grants will be combined with matching funds from recipient communities to plant an expected 1,479 trees. Each community will receive between \$500 and \$1,000 from the grant to plant trees on publicly-owned property. Recipients are encouraged to involve volunteers in all aspects of the projects. Communities receiving grants include Ankeny, Battle Creek, Bedford, Bettendorf, Bondurant, Carlisle, Cedar Falls (2 organizations), Clarksville, Clinton, Coralville, Denver, Essex, Fairfield, Fort Dodge, Fredericksburg, Granger, Harlan, Hiawatha, Hubbard, Johnston (2), Lake View, Lime Springs, Mapleton, Maquoketa, Muscatine (2), Nevada, Newton, Osceola, Oskaloosa, Pleasant Hill, Polk City, Shenandoah, Spencer, Strawberry Point, Urbandale, Washington, and Waterloo.

The Keepers of the Land program promotes volunteerism in protecting and enhancing our natural resources (see www.iowadnr.com/volunteer/index). For more information on volunteering, please see the website listed above or contact Matt Brewer (515-242-6892, Matt.Brewer@dnr.state.ia.us) for forestry or Merry Rankin (515-281-0878, Merry.Rankin@dnr.state.ia.us) for all other opportunities.





Forest Health Update

By Steve Pennington, Iowa DNR Forest Health Coordinator

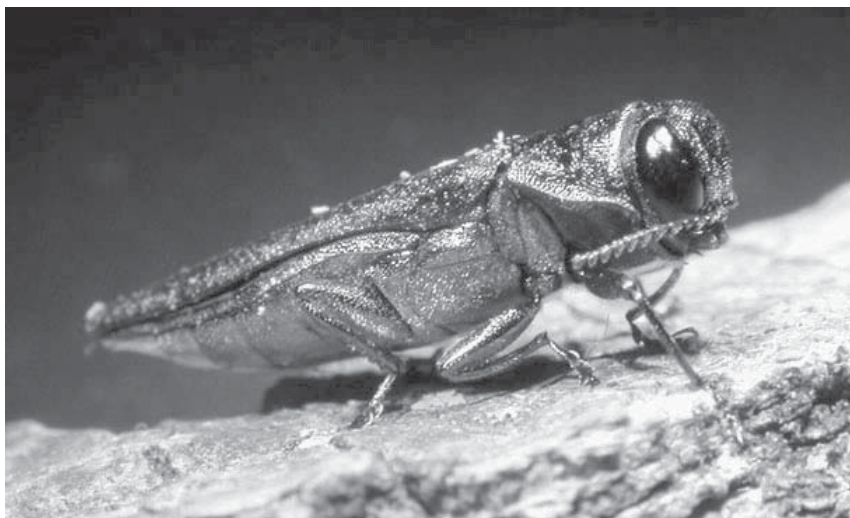
The first of two pertinent forest health items is Iowa's annual forest health tour. Please mark your calendar for July 13 and 14, 2004. This year's outing is scheduled for South central Iowa, with stops to investigate several forest and urban forest insect and disease situations. The tour is open to all and is an opportunity for persons working in forestry, entomology, pathology, arboriculture, and other natural resource fields to communicate with each other and to see forest health scenarios in the field. In 2003, the tour was focused on NE Iowa, including stops at city parks in Waterloo and Dubuque, and state forest and private sites with white oak decline, invasive species, and many other problems. The agenda is coming together for 2004, and the tour will include more public lands and city parks, and possibly stops regarding Christmas tree production, oak wilt, and prescribed burning.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is the second item. News continues to arrive regarding the spread of the EAB, an Asian boring insect discovered in Southeastern Michigan in 2002. The EAB is now confirmed in Windsor, Ontario, several Ohio locations, and recently in Northeast Indiana. The latest US Forest Service EAB pest alert sheet notes, "More than 3000 square miles in Southeastern Michigan are infested and more than 5 million ash trees are dead or dying from this pest." The EAB has not been discovered in Iowa and efforts are already in place to prevent infestation. Monitoring by agencies

will begin in 2004. EAB identification kits are being distributed to Iowa DNR District Foresters and other forestry personnel and offices. The Education and Research Committee of the Iowa Urban and Community Forestry Council has resolved to assist in keeping publications regarding the EAB updated and available. And, Michigan authorities are working vigorously to stop the EAB's Western movement by removing ash trees that are located within one-half mile of any newly discovered EAB infestations in Southwestern Michigan.

For more information about the Emerald Ash Borer, see the US Forest Service site www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/eab/.

Also, additional information about the July 13-14 Iowa forest health tour (including the agenda as the tour approaches) may be received by contacting me at steve.pennington@dnr.state.ia.us.



The adult Emerald Ash Borer is dark metallic green and about 1/2 inch long. Photo courtesy of www.emeraldashborer.info.

Species Diversity: The Key to a Quality Community Forest

By Mark Vitosh, Iowa DNR District Forester

Trees within communities provide many benefits, such as greater beauty, improved water and air quality, increased energy savings, increased wildlife diversity and habitat, reduction in noise, increased property values, and the creation of a better place to live. Over the years a number of pest problems have caused significant tree losses in Iowa and across the Midwest, and there are strong indications that new pest introductions will allow this trend to continue into the future. Initially the future of many community forests in Iowa and the Midwest looks bleak, but with proper planning and management, the negative impacts of new pest problems can be significantly reduced. The best way to battle the potential losses from insect and disease problems is to plant a diversity of tree and shrub species in your chosen community or landscape. This article will discuss past and current pest problems that have caused significant tree loss in the Midwest, and it will suggest how planting a diversity of species can improve the sustainability of the community tree resource and your own landscape on your property.

In the early to middle 1900's, communities all over the Midwest had significant populations of trees that lined streets, business districts, parks, and neighborhoods. In the late 1960's and early 70's, all of this changed when a problem called Dutch Elm Disease devastated many community tree populations. The fungus that causes this disease killed elms throughout the Midwest very quickly, and in Des Moines alone it is estimated that as many as 100,000 elms were killed on public and private property. Elm was such a significant part of many community tree populations that this loss left an immediate void.

Many communities responded to the loss of elms by planting significant amounts of green ash, silver maple,

Norway maple, and sugar maple as replacements. Studies of Iowa communities have shown that in some towns over 50% of the tree population consists of ash and maple. If a disease or insect problem is introduced in some Iowa communities, the tree loss and devastation could be similar to what happened with the elm trees in the 1960's and 70's. Currently, this lesson is being taught to the citizens of Michigan, where an insect called the Emerald Ash borer has already killed over 1 million ash trees in the Detroit area alone. The Emerald Ash borer is just the tip of the iceberg, though. There are other pests such as the Asian Longhorned beetle, the Gypsy moth, and the disease *oak wilt* that have the potential to become significant problems in the United States.

What can a community and/or an individual landowner do to reduce the risk of tree loss caused by an insect or disease?

- When selecting tree and shrub species, select those that are adaptable to local growing conditions and specific site conditions (i.e. soil type, drainage, available light, and growing space).
- Consider tree and shrub species that are native to Iowa whenever possible.
- When selecting specific varieties of trees or shrubs, choose those that have a high tolerance of potential problems. For example, there are selections of crabapples that have good tolerance to a crabapple disease called apple scab.
- In a community, avoid allowing any one tree species (i.e. green ash) to account for more

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Luncheon, continued from page 1

As I drove back to Davenport that afternoon, I reflected on the proceedings of the day. I felt recharged with the energy I had taken from the crowd. If others felt the same way, then the members of the Council achieved their goal. Happy Arbor Day, Iowa (held on April 30 this year).



From left to right: First Lady Christie Vilsack; Keith Majors, IUCFC Chair; Leona Shima of Allison receiving the *Outstanding Volunteer* award.



Doug Coziahr and John Batt of Council Bluffs accepting the *Outstanding Professional* award for Irene Angerloth.

Council Awards

<i>Outstanding Volunteer Award</i>	<i>Leona Shima, of Allison</i>
<i>Outstanding Professional Award</i>	<i>Irene Angerloth, of Council Bluffs</i>
<i>Outstanding Organization Award</i>	<i>Cedar Falls Trees, of Cedar Falls</i>
<i>Outstanding Youth Project Award</i>	<i>Ryan Goff, of Davenport</i>
<i>Outstanding Local Partner Award</i>	<i>Cedar Falls Utilities, of Cedar Falls</i>
<i>Outstanding Local Partner Award</i>	<i>Upper Iowa University, of Fayette</i>
<i>Outstanding Media Partner Award</i>	<i>Story City Herald, of Story City</i>
<i>Treeline USA Award</i>	<i>Alliant Energy and MidAmerican Energy</i>

Arbor Day Poster Contest Winners

Third Place-Stephanie Ihde of Garnavillo Elementary, Garnavillo

Second Place-Samantha Daniels, of Dysart-Genesco Elementary, Dysart

First Place-Abby Gleason, of Prairie Valley Middle School, Farnhamville



Amy Hoyer of Cedar Falls Trees receiving the *Outstanding Organization* award.



Steve Grimes of Bettendorf accepting the *Outstanding Youth Project* award for Ryan Goff of Davenport.

*A special thanks to Alliant Energy, Aquila, MidAmerican Energy, and Trees Forever, who were major sponsors of the luncheon.

Photos, continued from page 5



Betty Zeman of Cedar Falls Utilities receiving the *Outstanding Local Partner* award.



Representatives of Upper Iowa University of Fayette receiving the *Outstanding Local Partner* award.



Todd Thorson of the Story City Herald receiving the *Outstanding Media Partner* award.



1st Place Poster Contest winner Abby Gleason of Farnhamville.



2nd Place Poster Contest winner Samantha Daniels of Dysart.



3rd Place Poster Contest winner Stephanie Ihde of Garnavillo.

Species Diversity, continued from page 4

than 10% of the total tree population, and avoid allowing any one tree genus (i.e. elm, ash, maple, oak, etc.) to account for more than 20% of the tree population.

- In your own project or backyard, the more diversity you have, the better. This is important because many disease and/or insect problems are often specific to a particular species or group of trees or shrubs. This way if one specific tree group has a problem, the chances of it impacting other tree groups or species is limited.
- Install the selected plant(s) correctly.
- Utilize proper care and maintenance techniques throughout the life of the plant(s) to maintain good health and vigor. A healthy plant is often more tolerant to potential disease and insect problems.

In summary, there have been a number of pests that have had a significant impact on tree populations throughout Iowa and the Midwest, and there are new pests being introduced all the time. The best way to reduce the potential impacts of future pest problems is to continue to diversify our plant selection in our communities and home landscapes.

NOTE: This newsletter can be found online at either of two websites:
www.forestry.iastate.edu/iucfc/ OR www.iowadnr.com/forestry/.

Calendar of Events

June 9

Council Meeting
Ames

randy.cook@dnr.state.ia.us

June 19-26

Project AWARE River Expedition
Central Iowa

www.iowadnr.com/volunteer/04aware.html

June 25

Tree Steward Conference
Ames

cfeeley@iastate.edu

June 28-30

Community Forestry at Its Best National
Conference

Nebraska City, NE
www.arborday.org

July 13-14

Iowa Forest Health Tour
Southcentral Iowa

steve.pennington@dnr.state.ia.us

August 17 - September 21

Master Woodland Manager Program
Lee County
phw@iastate.edu

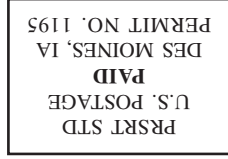
Iowa Urban and Community Forestry Council members:

Mark Masteller, IADOT
Don Brazelton, Iowa Assn CCB
Shannon Ramsay, Trees Forever
Patty Peterson, Trees Forever
Paul Wray, ISU Forestry Extension
Jan Thompson, ISU NREM
Jeff Iles, ISU Horticulture
Chris Feeley, ISU Forestry Extension
Mark Vitosh, IADNR
Jim Mason, Country Landscapes
Rick Tagtow, NICC
Keith Majors, Davenport

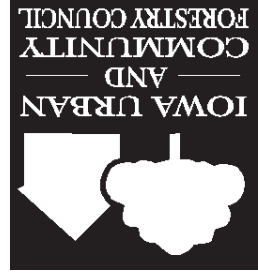


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Mike Brandrup, IADNR
John Walkowiak, IADNR
Randy Cook, IADNR
Mike Guidici, Greenway Habitat
Terry Robinson, Iowa City
Mike Bevins, IADALS
Steve Pennington, IADNR
Daniel Kalbach, Oskaloosa
Deb Ryan, Conservation Districts
Connie Maxwell, Johnston
Tom O'Neill, IADNR



There is no aristocracy in trees. They are not haughty. They will thrive near the humblest cabin just as well as they will in the shadow of a king's palace. There is a true triumph in the unswerving integrity and genuine democracy of trees.



J. Sterling Morton